

1/22/24



**THE TRIAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE TRIAL COURT**

John Adams Courthouse
One Pemberton Square, 1M
Boston, MA 02108

Heidi E. Brieger
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Thomas G. Ambrosino
Court Administrator

December 29, 2023

The Honorable Steven T. James
Clerk of the House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael D. Hurley
Clerk of the Senate

The Honorable Michael S. Day
House Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable James B. Eldridge
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary

Dear Sirs:

In compliance with the provisions of Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008, "An Act Further Protecting Children," please find enclosed the annual report for 2022.

This report provides the Joint Committee on the Judiciary with the information required relative to the prosecution and disposition of offenses established under the Act. We look forward to continuing to work with the legislature on monitoring the implementation of this legislation.

Very truly yours,

Heidi E. Brieger
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Thomas G. Ambrosino
Court Administrator

cc: The Honorable Karen E. Spilka, President of the Senate
The Honorable Ronald Mariano, Speaker of the House

FY2023 Annual Report

Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008
An Act Further Protecting Children



A Report to the
Clerk of the House
Clerk of the Senate
Joint Committee on the Judiciary

Submitted
by:

Heidi E. Brieger
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Thomas G. Ambrosino
Court Administrator

December 29, 2023

Annual Report to Support Implementation of

Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008 An Act Further Protecting Children

Introduction

This report was prepared to comply with Section 5 of Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008, "An Act Further Protecting Children" which provides that:

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, . . . the trial court shall establish and implement an annual reporting system that shall provide information to the joint committee on the judiciary relative to the prosecution and disposition of cases which involve offenses established under this act. The reporting system shall be established not later than December 31, 2008, and the first annual report shall be filed with the clerk of the house and the clerk of the senate and the joint committee on the judiciary not later than December 31, 2009.

In meeting this reporting requirement, this annual report summarizes the changes made by the legislation and presents relevant data on this population through state fiscal year 2023.

Chapter 205 Legislative Summary

Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008, entitled "An Act Further Protecting Children" was approved on July 24, 2008.¹ This legislation made the following changes to the offense structure in Massachusetts:

- Created three new crimes:
 - Indecent A&B on Child, Aggravated
 - Rape of Child, Aggravated
 - Rape of Child with Force, Aggravated

¹ On June 4, 2008 House 4811 was engrossed by a vote of 143 to 3; on July 15, 2008 it was engrossed in the Senate by a vote of 35 to 1; and on July 24, 2008 it was signed by Governor Patrick.

- Broadened the subsequent offender provisions for three crimes:²
 - Indecent A&B on Child, Subsequent
 - Rape of Child, Subsequent
 - Rape of Child with Force, Subsequent
- Established six new mandatory sentencing provisions:
 - Indecent A&B on Child, Aggravated
 - Rape of Child, Aggravated
 - Rape of Child with Force, Aggravated
 - Indecent A&B on Child, Subsequent
 - Rape of Child, Subsequent
 - Rape of Child with Force, Subsequent

Table 1 summarizes changes in the penalty structure and offenses that were created under this legislation. In this annual report, the focus was placed on those six offenses representing the new offenses and broadened offense elements. All of those six offenses involve new mandatory minimum penalties ranging from 10 years to 20 years. All of these offenses are in the sole jurisdiction of the Superior Court Department in Massachusetts. Offenders convicted and sentenced under these provisions will be sentenced to the Department of Correction.

² Previous requirement was prior conviction of the same offense and current legislation calls for prior conviction of any enumerated sex offense.

Table 1.

Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008, An Act to Further Protect Children Summary of Legislative Provisions

Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2008			Previous Statutes		Change	Revised Statutory Penalty	BMC / District Court Jurisdiction
c. 265 s. 13B	Indecent A&B on Child	c. 265 s. 13B	Indecent A&B on Child	No Change	10 year statutory maximum / 2 1/2 year house of correction alternative	yes, from Chapter 218, section 26	
c. 265 s. 13B ½	Indecent A&B on Child, Aggravated		New Crime / 10 year Mandatory	life felony / 10 year state prison mandatory minimum / no house of correction alternative	no		
c. 265 s. 13B ¾	Indecent A&B on Child, Subsequent	c. 265 s. 13B	Indecent A&B on Child, Subsequent	Broader Subsequent / 15 year Mandatory	life felony / 15 year state prison mandatory minimum / no house of correction alternative	no	
c. 265 s. 22A	Rape of Child with Force	c. 265 s. 22A	Rape of Child with Force	No Change	life felony	no	
			Rape of Child with Force, Armed, Firearm	Offense Eliminated			
			Rape of Child with Force, Armed, Firearm, Subsequent	Offense Eliminated			
c. 265 s. 22B	Rape of Child with Force, Aggravated		New Crime / 15 year Mandatory	life felony / 15 year state prison mandatory minimum / no house of correction alternative	no		
c. 265 s. 22C	Rape of Child with Force, Subsequent	c. 265 s. 22A	Rape of Child with Force, Subsequent	Broader Subsequent / 20 year mandatory	life felony / 20 year state prison mandatory minimum / no house of correction alternative	no	
c. 265 s. 23	Rape of Child, Statutory	c. 265 s. 23	Rape of Child, Statutory	No Change	life felony / 2 1/2 year house of correction alternative	no	
c. 265 s. 23A	Rape of Child, Statutory, Aggravated		New Crime / 10 year Mandatory	life felony / 10 year state prison mandatory minimum / no house of correction alternative	no		
c. 265 s. 23B	Rape of Child, Statutory, Subsequent	c. 265 s. 23	Rape of Child, Statutory, Subsequent	Broader Subsequent / 15 year Mandatory	life felony / 15 year state prison mandatory minimum / no house of correction alternative	no	

Chapter 205 Offense

Historical Data on Chapter 205 Related Offenses

As background to the current analysis, relevant information on offenders convicted of sexual assaults on children is considered. While Chapter 205 impacts only a small proportion of these offenders – those who meet the subsequent or aggravated provisions provided by the legislation – this background information should be useful for providing a context for considering the implementation of these legislative provisions.

The following tables are based on annual statistical reports from the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission and the Department of Correction and show the following information on selected sex offenders:

- The number of offenders sentenced in the Superior Court;
- The number of offenders incarcerated in the Department of Correction; and,
- The number of offenders committed to the Department of Correction.

As shown in Table 2, in FY 2018 125 offenders were sentenced for Indecent Assault and Battery on a Child, Rape of a Child, or Forcible Rape of a Child (including all subsequent or aggravated offense convictions) in the Superior Court Department in Massachusetts. While these statistics are based solely on governing offense, this substantially accounts for most sex offenders, as for most convicted sex offenders, the sex offense is their governing offense.³

Table 2.

**Governing Offense, Selected Sex Offenses,
Superior Court Department, FY 2010 to FY 2018⁴**

Governing Offense	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2018
Rape of Child, Forcible	37	31	27	27	25
Rape of Child	86	75	75	63	63
Rape of Child, Aggravated	1	8	13	15	18
Rape of Child w/ Force, Aggravated	0	0	0	1	1
Rape of Child, 2nd	0	0	1	1	0
A&B Indecent Child	28	32	31	29	16
A&B Indecent Child, Aggravated	0	1	0	0	0
A&B Indecent Child, 2nd	3	2	0	0	2
Total	155	149	147	136	125

³ The Massachusetts Sentencing Commission estimates that 4.3% of sex offenders convicted in the Superior Court Department were convicted of an offense other than a sex offense as the governing offense. (Massachusetts Sentencing Commission, *Survey of Superior Court Sentencing Practices, FY 2018*).

⁴ The source of these data is the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission, *Survey of Sentencing Practices, FY 2010 to FY 2013*, and Massachusetts Sentencing Commission, *Survey of Superior Court Sentencing Practices*, FY 2018.

Table 3 shows the number of offenders currently incarcerated in the Department of Correction for selected sex offenses for selected years from the period 2010 to 2023. As shown in Table 3, as of January 1, 2023 there were 635 offenders incarcerated in Department of Correction facilities for the offenses of Forcible Rape of Child, Rape of Child, and Indecent Assault and Battery on a Child.

Table 3.

**Governing Offense, Selected Sex Offenses,
Inmates in Department of Correction Facilities,
January 1, Selected Years, 2010 to 2023⁵**

Selected Sex Offenses	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Rape of Child, Forcible	317	309	295	289	276	265	253	239	240	227	208	184	162	157
Rape of Child	375	389	400	411	415	432	424	440	438	475	488	449	426	428
A&B Indecent Child	96	90	96	88	92	94	104	86	75	64	56	48	50	50
Total	788	788	791	788	783	791	781	765	753	766	752	681	638	635

Table 4 shows the number of new court commitments to the Department of Correction for the selected years from 2010 to 2022 for selected sex offenses. In 2022 there were a total of 122 offenders committed to the Department of Correction for Forcible Rape of Child, Rape of Child, or Indecent Assault and Battery on a Child.

Table 4.

**Governing Offense, Selected Sex Offenses,
Inmates Committed to the Department of Correction,
Selected Years, 2010 to 2022⁶**

Selected Sex Offense	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Rape of Child, Forcible	26	27	24	26	24	16	12	19	12	15	16	7	28
Rape of Child	57	65	82	69	78	62	69	58	80	69	28	46	82
A&B Indecent Child	14	29	13	30	23	23	15	22	10	16	9	14	12
Total	97	121	119	125	125	101	96	99	102	100	53	67	122

⁵ Massachusetts Department of Correction, responses to information requests dated November 23, 2010, October 26, 2011, December 5, 2012, November 15, 2013, November 19, 2014, December 30, 2015, November 14, 2017, December 10, 2018, December 4, 2019, December 9, 2020, December 9, 2021, November 28, 2022, and November 28, 2023. This table includes criminally sentenced offenders in the jurisdiction of the Department of Correction and excludes those offenders placed in treatment facilities managed by the Department of Correction such as the Bridgewater State Hospital or the Treatment Center for the Sexually Dangerous.

⁶ Massachusetts Department of Correction, responses to information requests dated November 23, 2010, October 26, 2011, December 5, 2012, November 15, 2013, November 19, 2014, December 30, 2015 November 14, 2017, December 10, 2018, December 4, 2019, December 9, 2020, December 9, 2021, November 28, 2022, and November 28, 2023.

Chapter 205 Report Statistical Results

As indicated in the reporting plan submitted in December 2008, the types of information available in the annual report to the legislature would include the number of individuals charged, the status of the case at the end of the reporting period, the number of defendants sentenced under this legislation, and the length of sentences imposed. The methodology used to implement this reporting system is contained in the Appendix.

As noted earlier, Chapter 205 became effective on October 22, 2008. Those who were charged with any one of the six designated sex offenses on or after that date were subject to the mandatory sentencing provisions of Chapter 205. The following table shows the results of the data collection efforts for those charged with a Chapter 205 offense where the offense occurred between October 22, 2008, and June 30, 2023, the end of FY 2023. This table is limited to those cases where one or more of the charges were one of the six Chapter 205 offenses (e.g. subsequent or aggravated charge with an underlying offense of forcible rape of child, rape of child, or indecent assault and battery of child).

Some of the findings shown in Table 5 are:

- There were 1,892 cases identified where one or more of the charges was potentially subject to the provisions of Chapter 205;
- These 1,892 cases involve 1,796 individual defendants;
- Of the 1,892 cases, 439 are currently pending and 1,453 have been disposed;
- Of the disposed cases, 1,015 resulted in a conviction and sentence and 438 cases had some other disposition (e.g. nolle prosequi, not guilty, dismissed, or no bill);
- Of the 1,015 convicted cases, 281 were disposed by a jury trial, 22 were disposed by a bench trial, and 712 were disposed by a plea of guilty;
- Of the 438 cases that were disposed of in some other manner, 47 were dismissed, 153 resulted in a not guilty verdict, 17 resulted in a not guilty finding, 212 were nolle prosequi, three defendants deceased prior to disposition, three cases had no true bill of indictment, and three were transferred;
- Of the 1,015 convicted cases, 958 resulted in a period of incarceration including 340 mandatory sentences, 551 other sentences to the Department of Correction, and 67 other sentences to a house of correction. In the 57 remaining cases, there were four sentences to probation to be served from and after a sentence to incarceration in the state prison on another case, 52 other sentences to probation, and one other sentence;
- Of the 340 mandatory sentences imposed, 161 sentences were longer than the mandatory minimum. Of the 551 Department of Correction sentences for non-mandatory offenses, 60 sentences were 10 years or more in length.

Table 5.
Chapter 205 Cases -
Cases Charged, Current Status, Disposition, and Sentence
by Year In Which Case was Filed

Case Status	Year Case was Filed															Total
	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	
Cases Charged	11	53	91	119	110	148	151	117	133	150	146	139	161	177	186	1,892
Current Status of Case																
Pending	0	1	4	3	2	5	6	3	12	9	27	34	53	113	167	439
Disposed	11	52	87	116	108	143	145	114	121	141	119	105	108	64	19	1,453
Total	11	53	91	119	110	148	151	117	133	150	146	139	161	177	186	1,892
Disposed Cases																
Convicted and Sentenced	8	38	63	81	70	102	95	83	92	98	84	75	72	42	12	1,015
Other Disposition	3	14	24	35	38	41	50	31	29	43	35	30	36	22	7	438
Total	11	52	87	116	108	143	145	114	121	141	119	105	108	64	19	1,453
Sentenced Cases																
Convicted of Chapter 205 Offense	3	13	26	34	24	35	22	17	32	38	28	27	27	8	6	340
Convicted of Other Offense	5	25	37	47	46	67	73	66	60	60	56	48	45	34	6	675
Total	8	38	63	81	70	102	95	83	92	98	84	75	72	42	12	1,015
Sentence Information																
20 Year Mandatory	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
15 Year Mandatory	2	1	2	4	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	25
10 Year Mandatory	1	12	22	30	21	30	20	16	30	36	27	26	25	8	5	309
Other Sentence to State Prison	5	19	26	37	33	55	58	56	49	52	44	41	40	31	5	551
Other Sentence to House of Correction	0	4	7	2	10	6	8	4	6	5	7	4	2	1	1	67
Other Sentence	0	2	4	8	3	6	7	6	5	3	5	3	3	2	0	57
Total	8	38	63	81	70	102	95	83	92	98	84	75	72	42	12	1,015

Summary

This report is intended to meet the requirements established by the Legislature under Chapter 205. It is the intention of the Executive Office of the Trial Court to maintain this annual reporting requirement by continued follow-up of pending cases along with reporting new cases that come before the court. The Executive Office of the Trial Court looks forward to continued work with the legislature on the implementation and monitoring of this legislation and welcomes suggestions or comments for further improvement of this effort.

Appendix - Chapter 205 Reporting Methodology

As noted in the planning report submitted in December 2008, the annual reporting system is required to consider the prosecution and disposition of cases under these provisions. At a minimum the reporting system should include the number of new cases filed, the number of cases resulting in a conviction, and the sentence imposed for those cases. The governing offense and secondary offenses were included. In order to be fiscally responsible, the reporting strategy relied on existing automated systems or statistical reporting systems.

The legislation requires that the annual reports be submitted no later than December 31. As recommended in the planning report submitted in December 2008, the annual reports submitted to the legislature include the most recent state fiscal year as well as a follow-up of cases identified in prior reports. The initial study sample was all defendants arraigned in Superior Court with one or more charges for a sex offense. From this initial broader sample, those cases where the specific provisions of Chapter 205 applied were selected for further data collection and analysis.

Chapter 205 was approved effective July 24, 2008 and became effective on October 22, 2008. All of the cases that were classified as potential Chapter 205 that were charged during the period July 1, 2008 through October 31, 2008 were considered to be charged under the old law. District court arraignment dates were reviewed to determine the status of those cases charged from November 2008 through June 2009 which are currently disposed to ascertain the applicability of the Chapter 205 provisions. For those cases charged in FY 2010 or later, it was assumed that the provisions of Chapter 205 were applicable.

Two data sources were used to measure the number of cases charged under the new and revised section of the legislation – the Trial Court's case management system (MassCourts) and the Office of the Commissioner of Probation criminal records system (CARI database). The Office of the Commissioner of Probation has information on arraignments and provided the number of new arraignments for selected offenses over the sampling period for FY 2009 – FY 2017. The Trial Court's case management system was used to identify the number of new arraignments for selected offenses in FY 2018, FY 2019, FY 2020, FY 2021, FY 2022 and FY 2023.

All the offense and descriptive information was reviewed to identify sex offense charges. All cases involving kidnapping, "Attempt to Commit a Crime" or "Conspiracy" were further reviewed to determine if the offense should be considered a sexual offense. Some of the sex offense related cases might have other types of charges associated with them. For example, a case might involve a sex offense and a weapons offense charge. For each case involving at least one sex offense charge, all of the charges were selected, representing those individuals arraigned in a superior court with one or more charges for a sex offense.

All charges from the MassCourts database were included even if some were arraigned at a prior period of time. For purposes of this analysis at least one of the charges was arraigned in the current sampling period. The unit of analysis for this report is a case and individual defendants can be in the sample more than once if they have multiple cases.

Further analysis was done of those cases from the initial sample with one or more charges for a sex offense. Based on those charges, defendants in the sample were assigned to one of four groups:

- Chapter 205 sex offenses (one or more charges for an offense impacted by Chapter 205);
- Child sex offenses (one or more charges for an offense not covered by Chapter 205 but involving a child victim);
- Other sex offenses (one or more charges of any other type of sex offense); and,
- Other offenses (one or more charges for attempt of a sex offense or other charges under a separate docket arraigned on the same date as a sex offense case).

For both FY 2018-2023 cases and previously identified cases, the current status of the case was determined from both the CARI database and the MassCourts database. The status of the case was determined through December 31, 2023. Cases were assigned to one of two statuses: pending (including active and suspended cases) and disposed.⁷ Cases that were awaiting sentencing were considered pending. All the offenses that are subject to the provisions of Chapter 205 are under the jurisdiction of the Superior Court Department and are subject to the Criminal Case Management standards adopted by the Trial Court.⁸ Cases involving rape are assigned to track "C" and other sex offense cases are assigned to track "B" with presumptive trial dates of 360 days and 270 days respectively. In this annual report, it is expected that many of the cases subject to the provisions of Chapter 205 will be active at the time of the data collection for this report.

For those cases that have been disposed, the type of disposition and sentence was collected using the data available in both the CARI database and the MassCourts database. Data collection on sentence structure was based on the method used by the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission in the on-going survey of sentencing practices. Type of disposition included the following categories: dismissed, nolle prosequi, not guilty finding, not guilty verdict, guilty plea, guilty finding, and guilty verdict. Where the offender had multiple charges in the case, the disposition reflects the most serious disposition in the case (e.g. guilty, not guilty, dismissed, nolle prosequi). For purposes of reporting the longest sentence is used to classify the case. In some instances, an offender may be convicted of a less serious offense than the Chapter 205 offense and this is reported.

⁷ As part of this review, a case previously reported in the 15 year mandatory category for the FY 2011 cohort was re-assigned to the 10 year mandatory category. This defendant has two cases: the first case resulted in a conviction for a 10 year mandatory for an FY 2011 case and the second case resulted in a sentence of 15 years but this was re-classified as a non-mandatory sex offense.

⁸ Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court, Standing Order No. 2-86
<https://www.mass.gov/superior-court-rules/superior-court-standing-order-2-86-criminal-case-management>.

